



U.S. Department of Justice

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EVENT: Guilt Plea

Defendant: Ronald Joshua Youngblood

**MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO VIOLATING THE CIVIL RIGHTS
OF AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILY**

DETROIT – United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy and Assistant Attorney General Wan Kim, of the Civil Rights Division, announced today that Defendant Ronald Joshua Youngblood, 25, pled guilty in federal court to violating the civil rights of an African-American family by burning a cross at the family's home.

Defendant Youngblood admitted in court today that he conspired with several friends to interfere with the housing rights of an African-American family, and that on June 20, 2006, he and several friends carried out their agreement by burning a five-foot-tall cross in front of the victims' home. The defendant also admitted that he set off an explosive device in order to awaken the family members so that they would run outside and see the cross.

Defendant Youngblood pled guilty to a civil rights conspiracy charge, to one count of interfering with the victims' housing rights and to one count of possessing an unregistered firearm.

Defendant Youngblood, faces a maximum term of 30 years imprisonment.

Civil Rights Division Assistant Attorney General Wan J. Kim said today that, “the right to fair housing, without fear of intimidation, is an essential right in the United States. The federal government will continue vigorously to prosecute individuals for racially motivated violations of housing rights. In our country, all Americans are treated equally under the law, and are entitled to the full protection of our civil rights laws.”

United States Attorney Stephen Murphy said, “As I have said before, the prosecution of cases involving the violation of civil rights laws is among the highest priorities of my office. Those who would violate the housing rights of others on the basis of race should be forewarned that their conduct will be met with criminal prosecution and the full force of federal law. Cross burnings are especially egregious acts of domestic terror toward others, designed to intimidate people in their homes. These and similar deplorable acts that violate applicable federal laws will not be tolerated.”

This case was investigated by the Sumpter Township Police Department and the Detroit Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Pamela Thompson and Trial Attorney Barbara Bosserman from the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice.